



Key facts on meningococcal vaccines

Two types of meningococcal vaccines are available at the global level:

1. **Polysaccharide vaccines** in the form of various combinations against groups A, C, W135, and Y. These vaccines have been available for more than 30 years and are currently used in reactive mass vaccination campaigns in Africa.

These vaccines are safe but have several disadvantages:

- They do not protect infants.
- They provide protection for only two to three years.
- They do not decrease carriage of the bacteria.
- They do not provide herd immunity because they do not decrease the transmission of the disease in the population.

2. **Conjugate vaccines** against group C and against groups A, C, W135, and Y. Newer and very expensive, these vaccines are mainly used in developed countries. The Meningitis Vaccine Project has developed a monovalent conjugate vaccine against group A ("MenAfriVacTM") which has been tested in Africa and India.

This vaccine should:

- Improve the body's immune response.
- Protect very young children.
- Decrease meningococcal carriage.
- Create herd immunity.
- Provide longer-lasting protection than that offered by polysaccharide vaccines (at least 10 years).